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DE RUEHAK #1633/01 1771214  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 261214Z JUN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2751  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5//  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
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RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001633

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/25/2022

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SUBJECT: TURKEY: MFA U/S APAKAN - MILD OPTIMISM ON  
TURKEY-EU; CONCERN ON ESDP AND ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION

REF: BRUSSELS 2000

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 b, d

11. (C) Summary. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Under  
Secretary (U/S) Apakan reviewed for Ambassador June 21

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Turkey's dialogue with the European Union (EU) and France on  
accession and bilateral relations issues. Turkey views both  
discussions with cautious optimism. Apakan also updated the  
state of play on ESDP and expressed concern about possible  
movement soon of the Armenian genocide resolution (AGR) in  
the US Congress. Ambassador reiterated previously-stated  
cautions about damage to Turkey's interests that  
confrontation over EU matters in NATO could engender, and  
pointed to work that Turkey must do following the July 22  
parliamentary elections to put relations with Armenia on a  
more positive track. End summary.

Turkey/EU/France  
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12. (C) Apakan said the government expects that up to three EU  
negotiating chapters may be opened this month. Turkey  
understands there is some resistance over the finance/economy  
chapter (indeed, that turned out to be the case), and that  
another variant is to open two chapters in June and two more  
during the Portuguese presidency. While three chapters would  
be better, the Turkish government will spin either this or  
2-plus-2 positively to blunt anxiety here over suspension of  
eight chapters last December, which the government has worked  
to contain.

13. (C) Apakan said Turkey worries that President Sarkozy's  
Mediterranean Union proposal is a "pretext" for working on a  
special EU relationship, vice membership, with Turkey. Such  
a privileged partnership remains uninteresting for Ankara.  
The prospect of membership is essential for leveraging  
progress domestically on Turkey's reform agenda, including on  
issues like Article 301 (that criminalizes "insulting  
Turkishness"), a law on foundations (that will ease pressures  
on the Greek and Armenian churches), etc. Otherwise there  
will be no clear goal. French Presidential Advisor Levitte  
had told Ankara the Med Union idea will not be used against  
Turkey. If it is pursued as an addition, not an alternative,  
to Turkey's EU bid, Apakan said, then Turkey is prepared to  
participate in development of the Med Union with speed and  
energy.

14. (C) On bilateral relations with France, Apakan said there has been progress. Levitte apparently indicated that the new French government will not proceed with last year's bill on criminalizing denial of the Armenian genocide. Paris-imposed constraints on bilateral economic and other ties will be removed. Paris has even suggested it might support Turkey's bid for a UN Security Council seat in 2010-11. Apakan said that Turkey will respond in similar spirit. He expressed cautious optimism about relations with France, which Turkey regards as a priority, and urged continued US encouragement of the EU accession process, including especially with the French.

15. (C) Ambassador restated long-standing US support for Turkey's EU accession efforts. He said Apakan's characterization of a possible shift in French attitudes on the Med Union is encouraging. If nothing else, working with Paris constructively on this could be a vehicle for strengthening personal ties and respect among Turkish and French leaders that may prove helpful later on. Ambassador also noted the EU progress report on Turkey expected in November that now appears to lack much positive content. Immediately upon conclusion of the elections and formation of the next government, Turkey needs to start to move fast on political and economic reforms so the report is a good one for Turkey.

ESDP

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16. (C) Apakan's portrayal of recent talks in Brussels tracks with that in reftel. He said that the tone of these and other recent discussions in NATO is good, but complained of too much focus on cosmetic improvements to the Implementation Document. These will not solve the problem. EU figures are

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proposing to Turkey things to which the EU is already committed and suggesting that the broader ESDP problem be deferred to the fall or next spring.

17. (C) It is also unfortunate, Apakan said, that the EU has not begun operations in Afghanistan without first having secured NATO support for this. He said the only real change was a switching of badges on relevant personnel reflecting their EU moniker. An ad hoc approach is not good for ISAF, NATO or Afghanistan; sooner or later, Apakan worried, this EU entity will ask for support from ISAF, NATO, or Afghanistan, and then there will be a big problem for which Turkey will be unfairly blamed. The EU should work now on meaningful changes, especially implementation of the security agreement and EDA. Apakan added that PM Erdogan may soon write to his NATO counterparts on the issue.

18. (C) Ambassador said that we are sympathetic to Turkey's underlying concerns about the EU. We are also determined that Afghanistan and Kosovo succeed. We want to see our allies and other friends pursue in every possible way and channel actions that will be helpful. Turkey should be careful not to add to already problematic perceptions of Turkey as a potential EU member - e.g., the very dialogue with the French Apakan had described earlier. It should bear in mind that when talking with NATO and EU member states, Turkey is dealing with the same foreign and defense ministries. They don't reserve one side of their brain for NATO and another for the EU, never the twain shall meet. Turkey's tactics now are driving some Europeans crazy, and the reaction in the EU, in NATO and otherwise will not be good for this country's interests.

Armenian Genocide Resolution

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19. (C) Apakan said that Turkey is deeply grateful for the Administration's hard work to deflect the AGR earlier this year. But in recent weeks, AGR backers have increased their

activities. The number of sponsors in the House has now reached 203; should it reach 213, the measure will be enacted, according to reports from Turkey's Washington embassy. Ankara hopes and expects that the Administration will remain actively engaged to oppose this measure. He said the government is ready to send Turkish political leaders back to Washington after the parliamentary elections to press this country's case.

¶10. (C) Ambassador pointed out that sponsorship by members of Congress is not enough to pass a resolution and that a vote must be taken. It may well be that some listed sponsors will not, in fact, be prepared ultimately to vote for the measure, though obviously 203 sponsors reflects large-scale support for the AGR. Ambassador reminded Apakan of their previous conversations about post-election initiatives toward Armenia.

PM Erdogan's spring 2005 initiative was a fine thing, but obviously it was not successful. New steps are necessary. Ambassador said he understood MFA Deputy U/S Cevikoz may have discussed possible new ideas with Armenia during his visit to Washington earlier in the week. The US is prepared to help, but Turkey will need to act beginning this fall if we are to have a realistic chance of preventing the AGR later this year or in 2008.

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